Preparing to Read

from Ray Bradbury Is on Fire! / The Flying Machine / The Dragon / The Fog Horn

Literary Focus

Literary Criticism: Biographical Approach Writers often draw on their own backgrounds to create a story. The setting may be a place they once lived. The characters may be based on people they have known. The themes of an author's work usually involve issues that concern him or her. As you read Ray Bradbury's works, think about how his beliefs and attitudes are reflected in them.

Reading Focus

Drawing Conclusions A **conclusion** is the final idea or judgment you come to after you've considered the evidence. You will be learning about Bradbury's life and reading three of his stories. From this, you will be able to draw conclusions about Bradbury's style and what motivates him to write his stories. As you read, record key biographical information and details from the selections in a chart like the one below.

Biographical Information	Details from Selection
distrusts new technology	

Writing Focus

Think as a Reader/Writer

Find It in Your Reading **Figures of speech** are words or phrases that create an imaginative comparison between two unlike things. Record in your *Reader/Writer Notebook* the **similes** (comparisons using *like, as,* or *resembles*) and **metaphors** (direct comparisons) that help bring Bradbury's fantasies to life.

Reader/Writer Notebook

Use your **RWN** to complete the activities for these selections.

Vocabulary

from Ray Bradbury Is on Fire!

contradictory (kahn truh DIHK tuhr ee) *adj.:* in disagreement; opposing. *Bradbury is a science fiction writer who is not interested in science—a contradictory position.*

The Flying Machine

writhed (rythd) *v.:* twisted and turned. *The long wall writhed across the land like a snake.*

serene (suh REEN) *adj.:* calm; undisturbed. *The Emperor's face looked serene as he gazed out at his peaceful kingdom.*

solace (SAHL ihs) *n.:* comfort. *The Emperor takes solace from his belief that he is protecting his people.*

Language Coach

Oral Fluency In English words that begin with *wr–*, such as *write,* the initial *w* is silent. Which Vocabulary word above falls into this category? How is it pronounced? Make a list of other words that begin with the letter combination *wr–*.

Learn It Online

Watch the action-packed video introduction at:

go.hrw.com L8-427 Go

Differentiating Instruction, modified lesson plans and leveled assessment

Holt English Language Development, systematic instruction and scaffolded content

Supporting Instruction in Six Languages, selection summary

Resources for Teaching Advanced Students, lesson plans

Analyzing Visuals Transparencies, p. 34

ThinkCentral Online Assessment, Selection Test

Preteach

Introducing Vocabulary

Read aloud the Vocabulary words and sample sentences. Then, have students use the Vocabulary words to complete the phrases below.

1. watched the snake as it _____ across the sand [*writhed*]
2. argue over our _____ opinions [*contradictory*]
3. give _____ to a friend who's sad [*solace*]
4. a calm, _____ painting of a landscape [*serene*]

Language Coach

Use **Language Coach** to help English-language learners acquire word-attack skills. ***Answer:*** writhed; *the* w *is silent when it is pronounced. Other words include* write, wrecked, wretched, wrong, wrist, wrap, wreath.

Literary Focus

As you read and discuss the selection with students, have them note details that might reflect Bradbury's background and beliefs.

Reading Focus

Give students a copy of the Reading Focus graphic organizer before they read. Tell them to use their responses to answer the questions on the Applying Your Skills page.

Writing Focus

Have students record similes and metaphors from the selections in their **Reader/Writer Notebooks**. Students can use their notes to complete the Writing Focus activity.

Learn It Online

The **PowerNotes** presentation for this selection includes a short video that introduces the selection. The video is also available on the online version of this page. Preview at **go.hrw.com**.

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Selection Introduction

More About the Writer

When he turned 80, **Ray Bradbury** said, "The great fun in my life has been getting up every morning and rushing to the typewriter because some new idea has hit me." Bradbury's creativity and work ethic has distinguished him as one of America's greatest writers. His work, however, is not limited to writing. His animated film *Icarus Montgolfier Wright* earned a nomination for an Academy Award. He adapted many of his own stories for the television series *Ray Bradbury Theater*.

Think About the Writer

Direct students' attention to the quotation from Bradbury on the page. Have them consider how Bradbury views his work as an author when they think of qualities that help make him a successful writer.

For Independent Reading

- If students like stories blending fantasy and reality, suggest they read more of Bradbury's work in collections such as *Bradbury Stories* and *A Sound of Thunder and Other Stories*.
- If students want to read a longer piece by Bradbury, they might enjoy *Dandelion Wine*, a novel about a magical summer in the life of a 12-year-old boy. Readers will notice the similarities between the fictional work and Bradbury's own childhood.

Learn It Online
Writers' Lives offers more information on the life of the author as well as Holt's interactive resources pertaining to the author. Preview at **go.hrw.com**.
go.hrw.com L8-428 Go

MEET THE WRITER

Learn It Online
Learn more about Bradbury at:
go.hrw.com L8-428 Go

Ray Bradbury

(1920–)

A Writer at Heart

At the age of twelve, Ray Bradbury wrote his first short stories in pencil on brown wrapping paper. He's been writing stories—and novels, poems, plays, and screenplays—ever since. Bradbury is famous for his work ethic. In more than seventy years of writing, he has published more than five hundred works. Bradbury moves effortlessly between past, present, and future. The settings of his works range from Mars and Venus to Ireland and Green Town, a fictional town based on his birthplace, Waukegan, Illinois. Whatever he is writing about, Bradbury's stories are marked by the fantastic, the mysterious, and the magical. They often express his belief that advances in science and technology should never come at the expense of human beings.

Encouraging Others

Bradbury has also explored the realm of nonfiction. One of his notable works of nonfiction is *Zen in the Art of Writing,* a collection of essays that captures the complete joy Bradbury experiences whenever he writes. In this book he encourages aspiring writers to view writing as an exciting venture:

Think About the Writer
What qualities do you think help to make Ray Bradbury such a successful writer?

Key Elements of Bradbury's Writing

Settings are strange and mysterious places, a combination of fantasy and reality. The past, the present, and the future may blend together in a single story.

Plots are often built around conflicts between characters and powerful forces. Characters may confront monsters, the sinister side of technology, or tyranny.

Messages often focus on our fascination with and our fear of technology. These messages often celebrate heroism and individual freedoms.



"Writing is supposed to be difficult, agonizing, a dreadful exercise, a terrible occupation. But, you see, my stories have led me through my life. They shout, I follow. They run up and bite me on the leg—I respond by writing down everything that goes on during the bite. When I finish, the idea lets go and runs off."

INTERVIEW

from RAY BRADBURY IS ON FIRE!

by **James Hibberd**

Read with a Purpose

Read these selections to discover Bradbury's views about technology and its impact on human beings.

Today Bradbury continues to criticize modern innovations, putting him in the seemingly contradictory position of being a sci-fi writer who's also a technophobe.[1] He famously claims to have never driven a car (Bradbury finds accident statistics appallingly unacceptable; he witnessed a deadly car accident as a teen). He is scornful of the Internet (telling one reporter it's "a big scam" by computer companies) and ATMs (asking, "Why go to a machine when you can go to a human being?") and computers ("A computer is a typewriter," he says. "I have two typewriters, I don't need another one"). A



Ray Bradbury typing on a typewriter.



By mocking the electronic shortcuts and distracting entertainment that replace human contact and active thinking, Bradbury shows his science-fiction label is misplaced. He cares little for science or its fictions. The author of more than thirty books, six hundred short stories,

1. **technophobe:** person with a fear or dislike of advanced or complex technology.

A **Literary Focus** **Biographical Approach** What is Bradbury's attitude toward technology?

Vocabulary **contradictory** (kahn truh DIHK tuhr ee) *adj.:* in disagreement; opposing.

Selection Readability	
Easily Accessible **Accessible** Challenging	interview format; accessible vocabulary; familiar theme
Lexile	**1180**

Selection Summary

James Hibberd interviews author Ray Bradbury to learn more about Bradbury's unique style of writing and his ideas about technological advances. The article also includes a time line of Bradbury's life.

Direct Teach

Think About/Talk About

Read with a Purpose Have students read the Read with a Purpose statement. Tell them to use what they've learned about Bradbury to predict his views about technology.

Analysis

A Literary Focus

Possible response: *Bradbury is skeptical of technology. He doesn't think it is worthwhile or necessary. He favors humans over computers.*

? Extend the Discussion

Interpreting Why does the author say Bradbury's title as science-fiction writer is misplaced? ***Possible response:*** *Science fiction usually glorifies technological advances. While Bradbury writes about fictional technology, he often points out its shortcomings and its unfavorable impact on society.*

Guided Practice

Model and Apply

- Provide students with copies of the Reading Focus graphic organizer for "*from* Ray Bradbury Is on Fire!" (See **Collection 4 Resources**.)
- Review the **biographical approach** for students. Tell them that readers can use the biographical approach in two ways. They can use what they know about the writer to make predictions about what his or her writing contains and what the writer believes.
- Remind students that, on the Meet the Writer page, they learned that Ray Bradbury often writes about scientific and technological advances and how they can change people for better or worse.
- Guide students through filling out the graphic organizer with the following information.

Biographical Information	Details from Selection
distrusts new technology	Computers aren't necessary for creativity—"There's no one way to be creative."

- Have student pairs make predictions about the content of Bradbury's stories based on this information and share their ideas with the class.

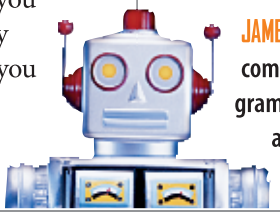
and numerous poems, essays, and plays, Bradbury is a consistent champion of things human and real. There is simply no ready label for a writer who mixes poetry and mythology with fantasy and technology to create literate tales of suspense and social criticism; no ideal bookstore section for the author whose stories of rockets and carnivals and Halloween capture the fascination of twelve-year-olds, while also stunning adult readers with his powerful prose and knowing grasp of the human condition.

One secret to Bradbury's lifelong productivity is that his play and his work are the same. When asked, "How often do you write?" Bradbury replies, "Every day of my life—you got to be in love or you shouldn't do it."

. . . When I phoned his Los Angeles home for a 9:00 A.M. interview, Bradbury was thoughtful and cranky, and told me he'd already written a short story.

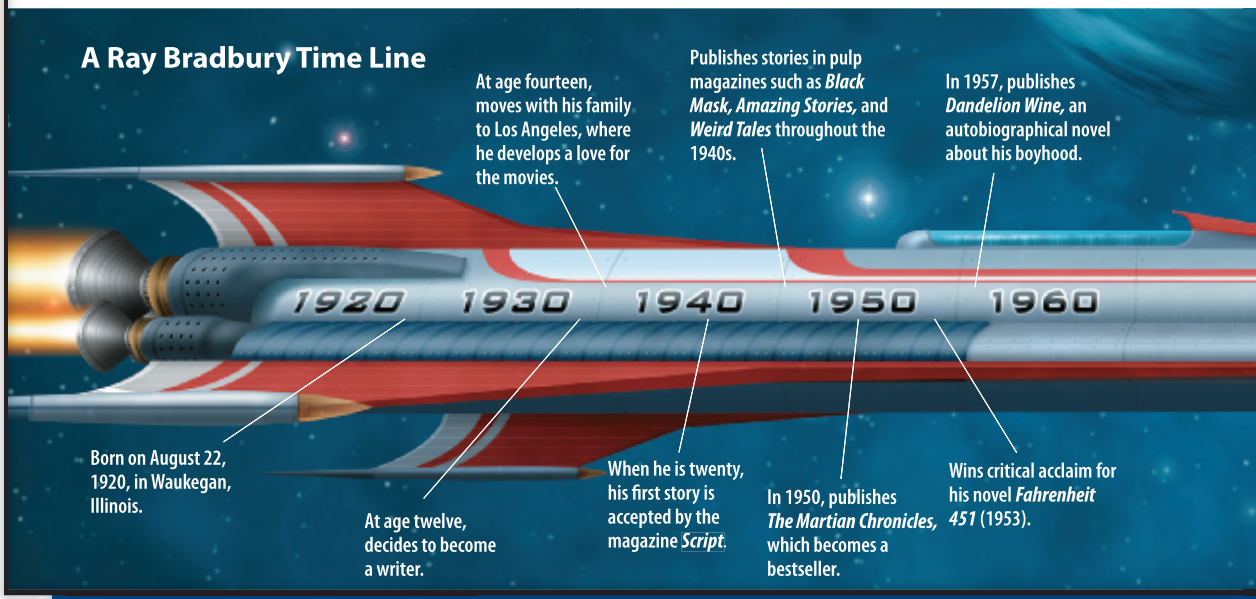
JAMES HIBBERD. **What makes a great story?**

RAY BRADBURY. If you're a storyteller, that's what makes a great story. I think the reason my stories have been so successful is that I have a strong sense of metaphor. . . . I grew up on Greek myths, Roman myths, Egyptian myths, and the Norse Eddas. So when you have influences like that, your metaphors are so strong that people can't forget them. B



JAMES HIBBERD. **You've been critical of computers in the past. But what about programs that aid creativity? Do you think using a word processor handicaps a writer?**

B **Literary Focus** **Biographical Approach** What are Bradbury's storytelling influences?



Research to Practice

Holt author ***Linda Rief*** *offers strategies for teaching "Author Study: Ray Bradbury."*

Ray Bradbury is an admired writer, one whose writing we not only enjoy, but whose writing has a lot to teach us. I use Ray Bradbury as a mentor author, taking the students through the process of reading a variety of his writings, showing them how to look more deeply at what he does, and then letting them choose an author they admire to study in even greater depth. I have students divide a large piece of paper into a twelve-column chart with the following headings:

- Author (in this case, Ray Bradbury)
- Lead—What does it do to you, the reader?
- What's the hook? What part keeps you reading?
- What do you know about the main character?
- What do you know about a second main character?
- Unique, refreshing, surprising, memorable wording?
- Ending—What does it do to you, the reader?
- Do you have questions as you read?
- Ideas of your own as you read?

RAY BRADBURY. There is no one way of writing. Pad and pencil, wonderful. Typewriter, wonderful. It doesn't matter what you use. In the last month I've written a new screenplay with a pad and pen. There's no one way to be creative. Any old way will work. . . .

JAMES HIBBERD. **What's an average workday like for you?**

RAY BRADBURY. Well, I've already got my work done. At 7:00 A.M., I wrote a short story.

JAMES HIBBERD. **How long does that usually take?**

RAY BRADBURY. Usually about a morning. If an idea isn't exciting you shouldn't do it. I usually get an idea around 8 o'clock in the morning, when I'm getting up, and by noon it's finished. And if it isn't done quickly you're going to begin to lie. So as quickly as you can, you emotionally react to an idea. That's how I write short stories. They've all been done in a single morning when I felt passionately about them. . . . C

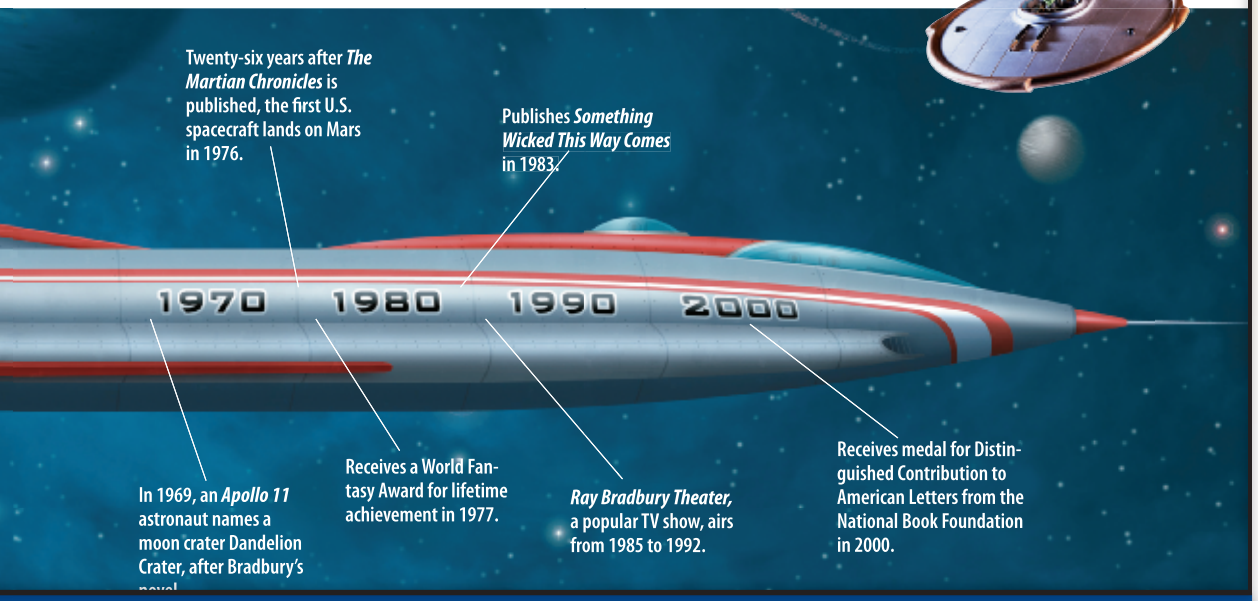


JAMES HIBBERD. **There's so much competition for a young person's attention nowadays. For the record, why is reading still important?**

RAY BRADBURY. Are you kidding? You can't have a civilization without that, can you? If you can't read and write you can't think. Your thoughts are dispersed if you don't know how to read and write. You've got to be able to look at your thoughts on paper and discover what a fool you were. . . . D

C **Read and Discuss** What is Bradbury saying about his manner of working?

D **Reading Focus** **Drawing Conclusions** What is the value of reading for Bradbury?



- What is a 3-5 sentence summary of the piece?
- Literary techniques used?
- What are you thinking as you read?

Under the Author column, students list the title and genre of each selection, leaving room for comments.

As we read, we stop and fill in the chart. I fill in one as well on the overhead, so students can see what I am discovering about Bradbury's writing. Across the very bottom of the chart, students summarize what they have learned about Bradbury's writing from looking at the categories in the chart. In other words, what did you notice about how Bradbury constructs a lead? What kind of hooks does he use to capture your attention?

Students can then use the same formatted chart to study their own self-chosen mentor to learn from and to emulate as they craft some of their own writing. Or, if students choose him to study, ask them to then use what they learned from Bradbury that they might try in their own writing.

Think About/Talk About

Comprehension

C Read and Discuss

Possible response: *He works consistently and passionately.*

D Reading Focus

Possible response: *He feels that without recording one's thoughts, the ideas vanish, and there can be no introspection. Therefore, civilization cannot exist if no one reads.*

Analysis

B Literary Focus

Possible response: *Bradbury's storytelling is influenced by his familiarity with myths. He credits myths with providing him with a strong sense of metaphor.*

? Extend the Discussion

Author's Thoughts Why do you think Hibberd asks Bradbury if a word processor can handicap a writer? ***Possible response:*** *Hibberd knows Bradbury does not welcome new technology, at least not at the expense of human interaction. Hibberd may have assumed that Bradbury would think the only way to write a story is to sit down with pen and paper.*

Check for Understanding

Monitor Students' Progress Guide the class in answering these comprehension questions.

1. What does Bradbury think of the internet? [*He thinks it is a scam by computer companies.*]
2. What kind of myths influence Bradbury? [*Greek, Roman, Egyptian, and Norse*]
3. What time of day does Bradbury usually finish writing? [*noon*]